Rome Oct 1st

My dear Maria

My last was so short & shabby that I cannot but write again to such a good sister all that I think will please her.

'Tis true that I wrote on the beginning of the month when I have a lot of imperative affairs to settle on that day yet as I feel that you must have been sadly disappointed that "brother Joe" could ever cut you short under any circumstances whatever — I will confess that I did not like to delay the money order even a day as I know you depend on it & so in some sort you'll try to excuse me

I write again also as you said in your last "that you were uneasy about me" to assure you that I do not know of any cause of uneasiness whatever

First as to my health I am doing well

indeed better than well when I reflect on the serious & even dangerous rheumatism I have suffered from & also at my age of near fourscore — Talking of age I have just had a fit with one who said "but I am many years older than you" for I am now 55 so I asked how old did he take me to be & he said some 45 or so" — I then told him that I was near 80 & he was quite amazed & assured me that he never knew the like even to my hand writing "this I know is the general opinion so you'll be well content on this ground then I'm tough

I confess altho I walk well yet ever since that ugly tumble which I know was rather clumsiness than weakness I am more nervous tho' only to walk with more caution — at Torquay I walked with more confidence & in the 2 months did at least 200 miles — You'll be glad to know

that under this new govt I receive such kind attention & am allowed to intercede for prisoners as I did before under the Pope – This gratifies one more than I can say for I delight in doing good, but I have made up my mind to do less of it than I did; for the great staircases & fatigue don't do well with me now – it may be rheumatism or it may be old age but I'll not do it any longer – I'm blow'd if I do.

I am actually making a new lease of five years of my house – would that I could make a lease of my life even for the same time? – I get the Roman rents are doubling & trebling & so as I get my house on the same terms so double I'm right as in case of my death it could be so easily let for the British Ambassadors Secretary can't find a house – indeed they all cast a sheep's eye at mine for it is a splendid one & so cheap – For this I have my usual good fortune